

Theme Community Meeting Notes

May 6, 2021 (1:00-2:30 PM ET)

Attendees

FGDC Staff

Name	Agency	Role(s)		Name	Agency	Role(s)	
Lorna Schmid	USGS	FGDC OS	✓	James Irvine	USGS	FGDC OS-CS	✓
John Mahoney	USGS	FGDC OS	✓	Robin Hoban	USGS	FGDC OS-CS	✓
Lynda Wayne	USGS	FGDC OS-CS	✓	Susan Harris	USGS	FGDC OS-CS	✓

Theme Community

Theme	Theme Lead/Co-Lead	✓	Agency	Proxy
Address	Matt Zimolzak		US Census Bureau	Sara Cassidy
Address	Steve Lewis		DOT	Dom Menegus
Biodiversity and Ecosystems	Marcia McNiff	✓	USGS	
Cadastre	Dominica VanKoten	✓	BLM	
Climate and Weather	Kari Sheets		NOAA	
Cultural Resources	Deidre McCarthy	✓	NPS	
Elevation	Ashley Chappell Hill	✓	NOAA	
Elevation	Susan Buto	✓	USGS	
Geodetic Control	Daniel Roman	✓	NOAA	
Geology	Paul Godfriaux		BOEM	
Geology	Dave Soller		USGS	
Governmental Units	Dierdre Bevington-Attardi		US Census Bureau	Sara Cassidy
International Boundaries	Lee Schwartz		DOS	Jesse Osborne
Imagery	Greg Snyder		USGS	
Imagery	TBD		USDA	
Land Use - Land Cover	Jim Ellenwood	✓	USFS	
Land Use - Land Cover	Brad Reed		USGS	
Real Property	Valerie Butler		GSA	
Soils	Drew Kinney	✓	USDA	
Transportation	Derald Dudley		DOT	Dom Menegus
Utilities - Offshore	Jeff Harris	✓	BSEE	
Utilities - Terrestrial	TBD			
Water - Inland	Megan Lang	✓	FWS	
Water - Inland	Becci Anderson		USGS	
Water - Oceans and Coasts	Patrick Keown	✓	NOAA	

Other Attendees

Chris McDonald, BLM; Mark Ames, BLM; Ron Salz; Brian Meyer, NOAA; Kirk Waters, NOAA; Matt Osborn, DOS; Steve Peaslee; David Carter, DOI; Karla Riso; Lisa Delmonico; Andy Archer, Steve Schwartz, Heston Smith, BOEM; Stephen Roecker, NRCS; Charlene Silvester, USACE; Shawn Maddock

Agenda

- ❖ Welcome and Roll Call
 - GDA Reporting, Status & Timeline
 - GDA CA & LCA Summary Reports & Report to Congress
 - NGAC Review and Comment Process
 - Next Steps
 - Final Lead Covered Agency (LCA) Theme Reports
 - LCA Reports and Dashboard
 - Discussion: Improved reporting options with survey-based approach
 - New Public Dashboards
 - Executive Dashboard ... for the NGDA Portfolio
 - Summary Statistics: Tracking NGDAs for Implementation of Standards
 - GDA CA (and LCA) Report Dashboard
 - NGDA Inventory & POC Updates
- ❖ **David Carter, DOI GIO** - Update on the GeoPlatform
- ❖ Open Discussion

Summary of New and/or Ongoing Actions

Responsible Party	Description
Theme Leads and Dataset Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NEW<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ FY2021 Lead Covered Agency Report Working Group – Any Theme Leads who would like to participate in a new FY2021 Lead Covered Agency (LCA) Report Working Group, please send an email to NGDATeam@FGDC.gov. The Working Group will evaluate the requirements for the FY2021 LCA reporting cycle, including the approach for developing NGDA Theme reports and plans.• Ongoing:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Metadata Review – Review the email sent by Lorna on 1 November and invitation to MS Teams room sent on 25 October for details and next steps for NGDA metadata review and improvement process. Email the NGDATeam@FGDC.gov with any Teams room access issues or other questions.○ NGDA Criteria and Process - Any Theme Leads who have questions about the criteria or process for nominating new NGDA Datasets or making changes to existing NGDA Datasets, follow up with the Portfolio Management Team (NGDATeam@FGDC.gov).○ Theme Community POC Validation Email - If you receive an email from Lorna requesting validation of contact information for the Theme Community POC list, please respond.

GDA Reporting, Status & Timeline

GDA CA & LCA Summary Reports & Report to Congress – Lorna Schmid

Lorna: We have a lot of Geospatial Data Act (GDA) reporting. The overall status is the Covered Agency and Lead Covered Agency Reports were all completed and they are posted on the FGDC website (<http://fgdc.gov/gda/gda-reports>). All of the GDA resources and other information are found on <http://fgdc.gov/gda>.

There is also a summary report which was provided to the National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) for their comments, which were approved last week. The summary report and comments will be folded into the Phase II Report to Congress due by June 30th.

The two GDA timelines are on the GDA website. We are in the period now where we are generating a response to the NGAC report, and then finalizing the report to Congress and get that to the Steering Committee.

The GDA law says that the annual reports need to be made available online with a summary of status of each of the NGDA Themes and also a summary and evaluation of achievements for each of the covered agencies. So, those are the self-assessments provided in the reports. That work has been done. In the summary report, we worked hard to keep it short since there was a lot of information in a very short timeline to create the summary. John Mahoney will go through the summary process and the report that went to NGAC. That report will be provided online once we incorporate some comments that NGAC provided.

We took the self-assessments from the CA reports for the 13 requirements. For each requirement there was a suite of questions that the agencies answered, and their self-assessments were based on that. As you know, we took a slightly different approach for the LCA reports. The summary report also provides links to the final reports on the FGDC website. And, we provided a couple of dashboards.

CA and LCA Dashboards

The dashboards are linked on the fgdc.gov/gda page under reports. For the [Covered Agency Annual Report Dashboard](#), you can select the agency and see the individual questions and answers. For the [Lead Covered Agency Annual Report Dashboard](#), the entire template is not in a dashboard, but we did put the four requirements (A)-(D), and the link to the full report in it.

While they appreciated that, there is room for improvement looking ahead. They thought some of the criteria is broad, and they have suggestions for how to tighten that up and be more granular for the metrics.

There are a number of recommendations for future reports. One of the consistent themes is that the GDA included a lot of additional reporting and other responsibilities but did not come with any additional resources. They made the point that full implementation will require additional resources for agencies. They also made the point that there are some critical agencies that were not included under the GDA like the Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Communications Commission, and they suggested that Congress may want to add additional agencies as covered agencies. NGAC also represents a lot of different sectors and stakeholder groups, and they encourage us as we to continue with the planning to engage with stakeholders in the process.

Other suggestions are to improve and enhance the survey, continue with the dashboard approach, improve metrics, and add levels of granularity to the 'making progress' category for reporting.

The NGAC comments are posted on the website now:

<https://www.fgdc.gov/ngac/meetings/april-2021/ngac-comments-on-fy-2020-fgdc-summary-of-gda.pdf/view>

Next steps: the draft summary will be finalized, and that plus the NGAC comments are the two key components for Phase II Report to Congress. We will be sharing that with the Steering Committee and other groups and coordinating with the Chair and the Office of Management and Budget on the approval and transmittal process to get the report to Congress by the end of June.

Lorna: I wasn't in the NGAC meeting, but the LMA process has multiple designations that can be selected for describing progress and status of the various LMA questions so we can take that approach for the next generation of the annual reports. What we were doing for this baseline, was answering the mail on what the law requested. And what the law asked for was the three designations of making progress, meeting, or failing to meet the expectations. I think there is room for us to refine the process, but we need to be careful that any refinements we make still allow us to have the start of a temporal record. We'll also be looking for opportunities to highlight where there may be constraints to meeting the requirements so that message can be made clear to Congress.

Status of Updated A-16 Guidance

One other update is Ivan DeLoatch said they expect the updated A-16 guidance should be out next month. We've all been waiting for that for quite a while.

Other New Public Dashboards

Lorna: The new [Executive Dashboard ... for the NGDA Portfolio](#) is linked on the [NGDA Portfolio Community](#) page, but we want it to be more prominent on FGDC.gov so we'll look at that. The Executive dashboard has a lot of good high-level information about our NGDA Portfolio. It has info on the baseline standards inventory, the number of datasets available for each Theme, link to the Theme Community page, and breaks down the number of NGDA datasets by agency. If I select DOI, for example, you can see how many datasets there are by bureau.

Another one is the [Summary Statistics: Tracking NGDAs for Implementation of Standards](#) for the NGDA Baseline Standards Inventory. You can go in and see results either by Department or by Theme.

When we take on the work to assess the standards, we have an analytical dashboard that will allow us to do a deep dive by dataset, theme, or standard. We can use that as a foundation for FGDC to identify what standards will need to be implemented.

NGDA Inventory & POC Updates

Lorna: In the process of completing the baseline reports, we identified new Executive Champions so those have been updated. We also found out that Imagery Theme Co-Lead, John Mootz, retired so we're waiting to hear of his replacement.

Update on the GeoPlatform - David Carter

The first thing I want to do is help people understand that there is more to the GeoPlatform than just the webpage. GeoPlatform is comprised of three major components. The first being Esri ArcGIS Online (AGOL). We have over 3,400 federal and non-fed users working in AGOL doing a lot of collaboration and sharing data. The second is the Amazon Webhosting service. We're offering access to webhosting services with over 30 government users. We set up the basic GIS stack (either Esri or Open Source). We work with the vendor to set up security, Authority to Operate (ATO), and basic helpdesk services. The third is the new webpage interface and search function for people to find data. We have current events under development. This would include datasets most used, highlighted applications. There is also a new viewer.

One of the biggest changes is behind the scenes. We changed the data curation process, so all metadata is being pulled from Data.gov. Anything with geospatial-compliant metadata in data.gov is pulled into geoplatform.gov.

A future goal is to modernize the Communities. We have a demo section, and we've tried to make it easier to get information on cloud hosting services.

In the search, we're providing more information to allow people to make decisions on using the data. In this example, the dataset lists the metadata type and whether it is complete. If you click on the raster tile service, you can see the data on the viewer. It's not designed to replace

data services, but a quick visualization for determining whether it is a good dataset for their project. The viewer is based on Terria. You can add cached datasets to the map. We hope to add functionality including querying so you can do it all right in there.

The apps and demo section is on the front page. This shows how to use some of the data that is cached. It also shows the source code and shows you how to use open source tools to add maps and data analysis into their own application.

The next part is the start of an NGDA Import Report. It will be improved in the future to be a better dashboard. This tells us what is coming in and going out. The reason it is important to have this automated and in a dashboard is because metadata is driving everything. The old way of having a person manually input it will be out so if metadata changes or there is an update to something, it will be done dynamically.

Lorna: Thank you David, that was very informative. The NGDA Portfolio Management team and the GeoPlatform team are coordinating a meeting to discuss the ingestion reports David was just talking about. The GeoPlatform team has been working really hard to completely reengineer the entire stack. David was showing the status of the metadata as to completed or unknown, etc. The NGDA team will identify how that's being determined and managed to make sure the Metadata Guidelines are updated to provide the agencies all the information they need to accurately ingest their metadata.

Open Discussion

Dan Roman: What are the plans for 2021 reports?

Lorna: We're working on evaluating the process for this year and making recommendations on how we can work towards having the reporting and plans accomplished while reducing staff resource requirements. We're talking about a checklist that would allow agencies to point to other existing documentation or information (guidelines, policies, strategic plans, etc.) that are managed in support of the NGDA data that could be used to highlight how GDA requirements are being met. Rather than duplicating those efforts.

We will not be continuing down the path of Theme Strategic and Implementation Plans, etc. We will be looking at draft ideas and processes that we will float out to the greater FGDC community to get feedback and buy in. We know that a lot of things that the law is calling for in plans are already being done, so we want to point to that. And, we could then produce the reports based on that checklist.

Dan: The law did require that the Departments have their own geospatial strategies aligned to the national one. There is an effort within NOAA to align subordinate strategic plans to that, and then to the DOI one.

Lorna: Good. One of the other GDA requirements for the Themes is to identify goals that align to the NSDI goals. Maybe those become goals across the Themes. For example, the FGDC NGDA

community will focus on metadata, ingestion into the GeoPlatform, etc.

Dan: As long as the Departmental plans support the NSDI, then we could point to that and at the Program Office level would support it at the program or NGDA level.

John: The NGAC pointed out that the criteria that the Inspectors General (IG) came up with were different than what the agencies came up with. One of the benefits of a consistent process will be to inform the IG reports. Also, the Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO) has done a couple of versions of the NSDI report card, and they are also looking at that for 2022. Having this level of information across the board will really help inform that process too. One suggestion would be to have a dialog with the IG organization, Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE), to help them take a more consistent approach for the next set of audits.

Lorna: Excellent point. The IGs are independent for each organization but there have been discussions at the GDA Working Group that we could provide them with the annual reports.

Steve: The new GeoPlatform looks great. Are there any plans for improving the data.gov system?

Lorna: I sent a doodle poll to Ron Sequeira and Lisa Delmonico to get together with David Carter and Data.gov to look at metadata workflows specifically for USDA and USFS. We're going to try to document in the Metadata Guidelines exactly what agencies need to provide to get their metadata ingested into data.gov and the GeoPlatform. Historically, USDA was using an Esri product that was delivering a DCAT metadata record. We're looking at what is needed to get your agency out of that Esri environment and also what is necessary to get the metadata ingested into GeoPlatform.gov.

David: One of the reasons we're really interested in the ISO format is some of the work we're really interested in doing in the future. We're getting a lot of interest around the new Executive Orders, especially around climate change and the environment. We want to use artificial intelligence and be able to start asking questions in the GeoPlatform and generating automated responses. That is one of our driving interests in having ISO metadata.

Lorna: Thank you everyone and to the team – Jim Irvine, Robin Hoban, and Lynda Wayne. There is a lot of work for the NGDAs and it is very much appreciated, including all that all of you do.

Next meeting - **UPDATED**

Thursday, June 10, 2021 1:00-2:30 PM ET